Lake County History Center News

SPRING 2021

Volume 63 Issue 1

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear Friends of History,

Happy New Year and spring! As we look ahead to 2021, I would like to look back on a few items since our last newsletter. Following our highly successful History Hollow’s Eve event, circumstances beyond our control upended much of our planning and scheduled events during the holiday season. Sadly, all of our holiday offerings had to be postponed. This included our annual and much anticipated “Home for the Holidays” event.

During this hiatus, our staff has continued to work tirelessly at growing our brand and establishing our place in the Lake County community. I have had ample opportunity to observe and engage with our employees. I came to realize how passionate our employees are in their work. To them it is more than a job, it is a passion, and they deserve our utmost respect and gratitude. As for our volunteers, their passion, their productivity, and their love for our Center, speaks for itself. I have never been around a group of people more committed to the betterment of an organization.

With that said, we have one bit of unfinished 2020 business. We still have an unwrapped 2020 Christmas gift which resides under the Center’s Christmas tree. It is a package bursting at the seams and full of good cheer. Inside you would find a continued focus on constructive change and growth, a set of ideas that continue to blossom, and the planning and organization of future events and activities.

Perhaps more than ever, I wish you, our dedicated membership, a happy and healthy 2021.

Thank you,

Mike Mohner

DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

Directors Letter, Amy Kapostasy

Dear Friends

This March marks one year since life in Greater Cleveland was upended by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the past 12 months, the challenges have been profound; lives and livelihoods have been lost, and deep-seated disparities across nearly every measure of well-being in our community have widened. In the midst of all of this, we have also seen the incredible generosity, creativity and resiliency of members of our community in action.

We would like to extend our deep gratitude to the frontline workers and everyone who has given their time, dollars and other resources to help organizations navigate this crisis. Whether you have found yourself in a position to give help or receive help over the course of the pandemic, it has reminded us that we are all in this together.

The Lake County History Center remains committed to our mission while addressing and working with the needs of our community, and also considering the systemic issues that have been further illuminated by the pandemic and its effects.

Thank you for your support,

Amy Kapostasy
“WE NEVER KNOW HOW WE ARE IMPRESSING OTHERS.”
“MY FAMILY? THAT’S ALL OF PAINESVILLE.”

These inspiring quotes are from Dr. William and Mildred Rucker, two people who changed Lake County for the better.

Dr. Rucker decided to go into medicine after two childhood events. After a vaccination as a teen, his arm became infected and swelled up. A doctor at his church healed him. Later, his uncle died in a hospital from a ruptured appendix. At that point, he knew his path in life.

Dr. Rucker attended Meharry Medical College in Nashville, TN. Affiliated with the United Methodist Church, Meharry was founded in 1876. It was the first medical school for African Americans in the South, which then held the highest proportion of this ethnicity. It was only the second medical school in the country.

After graduating, the Ruckers moved briefly to Cleveland, then to their final home in Painesville.

They heard about Painesville from Rev. Calvert, pastor of St. John Baptist Church. Their relationship with the pastor and their new church lasted the rest of their lives. Both remained very involved, holding leadership roles and donating both time and money. Dr. Rucker even helped to build the basement of the current building.

The Ruckers were both active throughout the community. It was said that they “literally touched the lives of every African-American child born in Painesville” during their time here. And it didn’t end when they left the doctor’s office. The Ruckers wanted to instill a belief in African-American children that they could do great things. They mentored the children, teaching them African-American history, fostering self-respect, and exposing them to life experiences, such as museums, gardens, etc. through regular “field trips”.

For more than 30 years, Dr. Rucker was the only African-American doctor in Lake County. When he first arrived, he applied to Lake Memorial Hospital as a staff doctor. At that time, doctors took a test before being hired at Lake Memorial Hospital. When he went to take the test, he was told not to bother – he wouldn’t be hired anyway because he was black. When he was finally able to take the test, he had the 3rd highest score, so the hospital had no choice but to hire him. Over time, his personality and skills helped him win the respect of his all-white peers. Later, in 1944, he added a private practice out of his house in Painesville.

Mildred Rucker was also very active in the community beyond the volunteering she did at her church and acting as both office manager and nurse for her husband. She achieved a huge list of “firsts” to her credit, such as first African-American woman in the American Red Cross, American Cancer Society, and Lake County League of Women Voters. She organized the Lake County Chapter of the NAACP. In 1972, she received an honorary PH.D. in liberal arts from Lake Erie College in recognition of her years of service at the college.

Without a doubt, both Dr. and Mrs. Rucker spent their life giving back to their community. Their service and influence is still impacting lives in Lake County today.
Storytime at The Center

The Lake County History Center loves to tell stories. In honor of National Storytellers Week (Jan 30-Feb 6), we have introduced a monthly video series targeted to young listeners, 4-7, on Facebook.

February’s video was about Snowflake Bentley, the first person to take a close-up picture of a snowflake. We even included pictures of snowflakes taken by Lake County’s own, Jeff Goodman. Additional videos will be introduced each month, entertaining children (and adults) with stories about pioneer life.

A LETTER TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Ever since late last year when I got back from my sister’s home in Louisiana, I’ve been thinking of reaching out to all of the volunteers to let you all know that we have not forgotten you. A few volunteers continue to work on special projects and upkeep at the Center but, with the cancellation of most of our events, we haven’t had the opportunity to see the rest of you and, WE MISS YOU ALL! Now that our “annis horribilis” is over and the Covid-19 vaccine is beginning to make its way through the population, I’m looking forward to being able to once again have our regular events and seeing all of you at the Center once more. On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Volunteer Association, I hope all of you are staying well and we’ll be in touch very soon.

Kathy Lupold
April

7
WINE AROUND Frank Moody: Mogul & Mansion 6PM at CANDOREN GUEST HOUSE 448 Mentor Ave, Painesville, OH Owner Lisa Lewins shares the history of this 1911 mansion and the Steele-Moody family that built it. $40 Member • $45 Nonmember

LADIES & GENTS WHO LUNCH Unrivaled Roses NOON at LCHS BARN Mentor was renowned as the “rose capital of the nation”. Cathi Weber will share the stories behind the history. $17 Member • $20 Nonmember

May

12
WINE AROUND Uncorking Grand River Valley 6PM at FERRANTES 5585 OH-307, Geneva, Ohio Donnie Winchell will share the history of wineries in Lake County’s Grand River Valley. $40 Member • $45 Nonmembers

BRUSHES FOR LUSHES 6:30PM at LCHS BARN BYOB and make a Summer creation. $30

June

9
WINE AROUND Marine Mishaps 6PM at LAKE ERIE BLUFFS 3100 Lane Road, Perry, Ohio Lake Erie has it’s share of drama. David Webster tells the tales of the mishaps at sea that haunt our great lake. $40 Member • $45 Nonmember

12
BEER & BRAUTS NOON at LCHS BARN Treat your dad to beer, Frank’s brauts, music, and fun. Music by Steve Madewell $18 Member • $20 Nonmember • $8 Child’s Meal

15
LADIES & GENTS WHO LUNCH Prohibition Era Lake County NOON at LCHS BARN From speakeasies to secret bars, the stories are many. Drink in the stories of prohibition as shared by Vince Wilson. $17 Member • $20 Nonmember

17
LADIES & GENTS WHO LUNCH Quilts Tell a Story NOON at LCHS BARN Throughout history, quilts have been used for more than just keeping warm. Hear the stories behind quilts from the past. $18 Member • $20 Nonmember • $12.50 Child 4-11 • Free Child 3 & Under

July

15
LADIES & GENTS WHO LUNCH Our Inventors NOON at LCHS BARN Tonya Busic introduces the men and women of the Western Reserve that changed the world with their innovations. $17 Member • $20 NonMbr

17
BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR 6:30PM at LCHS See areas and artifacts not open to the public. $18 Member • $20 NonMbr

22
CHRISTMAS IN JULY Group Day 11AM-2PM at LCHS Covid cancelled Christmas, so be jolly in July. Bring your group for lunch, view the sights, and shop. $18

23
CHRISTMAS IN JULY 10AM-3PM at LCHS Covid cancelled Christmas, so be jolly in July. View the sights and visit the vendors. $7 Adults • $3 Child 4-11

24
CHRISTMAS IN JULY 10AM-3PM at LCHS Covid cancelled Christmas, so be jolly in July. View the sights and visit the vendors. $7 Adults • $3 Child 4-11

NOTE: Reservations Required for all programs at www.Eventbrite.com or 440-639-2945
What we have been up to

The Board learned to Zoom

Prepping the floor

Tom & Bob working in the kitchen

Our NEW kitchen in the barn

Booking events
For Volunteering Opportunities
Contact our Volunteer Coordinator
Dorothy Wise at
dwise@lakehistory.org
(440) 639-2945 ext. 14
ABOUT LAKE COUNTY HISTORY CENTER

Lake County History Center is owned and operated by the Lake County Historical Society, a 501c3 nonprofit founded in 1968. Situated in Lake County, Ohio on eight acres at 415 Riverside Drive In Painesville Township, OH, LCHS maintains the historic 1876 Italianate structure, formerly the Lake County Home. Today it houses a museum with permanent and changing exhibits, a library, rental venues, and a gift shop. The History Center also operates an onsite performance and event barn as well as an 1823 Pioneer Village. Onsite and offsite education programs & events for adults and children are offered throughout the year. The LCHS mission is to preserve, educate, and learn about Lake County, Ohio history. **Hours: Please call to make an appointment**

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